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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 03 BAGHDAD 000271

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [PBTS](#) [IZ](#)  
SUBJECT: IMPLEMENTING THE COMBINED SECURITY MECHANISMS IN  
NORTHERN IRAQ

Classified By: A/DCM Gary A. Grappo for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[¶1.](#) (SBU) This is a joint Embassy Baghdad/USF-I message.

[¶2.](#) (S) SUMMARY AND COMMENT: The Combined Security Mechanisms (CSMs) consist of temporary, non-political measures across the disputed internal boundary (DIBs) areas of northern Iraq, and are designed to ensure the security of the Iraqi population. Key features include Combined Checkpoints (CCPs), Combined Security Areas (CSAs) in which combined Iraqi-Kurdish-U.S. forces will patrol, and Combined Coordination Centers (CCCs) through which operations will be coordinated. These measures have the corollary effect of reducing tensions between Arabs and Kurds, and increasing security during the period of highest risk through Iraq's upcoming national elections and government formation. Long term security in the DIBs areas requires political solutions; the CSMs can help mitigate tension and engender cooperation between Arab and Kurdish actors. Commanders of the Iraqi Army (IA), Iraqi Police (IP), Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Guard Forces (peshmerga) and United States Forces (USF) have begun training and other preparations necessary to implement the CSMs. It is anticipated that the CCPs and CSAs will be at initial operating capability no later than January 31 (talking points on implementation at para 11). While there has been some opposition to the CSMs from those eager to claim that the location of the CCPs and CSAs constitutes a new de facto boundary between the Iraqi Kurdistan Region and the rest of Iraq, most Iraqi interlocutors privately welcome the initiative as a means to improve security and tamp down tension in the volatile DIBs areas. END SUMMARY AND COMMENT.

CONTEXT

[¶3.](#) (S) Across northern parts of the country, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and other violent extremist groups continue to exploit the de facto internal boundary created by the separation of Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and peshmerga. Insurgent forces have fomented tension between ISF and peshmerga elements, and exploited unguarded seams of territory between the two to conduct terrorist attacks and criminal activity. Beginning in the summer of 2009, a series of well-publicized attacks against minority communities in the DIBs areas, particularly in Ninewa province, threw the nature of the threat into stark relief. At the request of PM Maliki, USF-I, in consultation with GOI and Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) counterparts, facilitated the development of the CSMs to knit together the seams and improve security.

A TEMPORARY MEASURE TO PROTECT IRAQIS

[¶4.](#) (S) Through a series of three meetings over a period of several months, USF-I brought together senior GOI and KRG security officials, many of whom had never before met

face-to-face. The intent of the sessions was to convince both sides that they shared a common enemy in the extremists, whose activities threatened to ignite ethno-sectarian conflict along the fault line of the DIBs areas. The GOI's Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, together with the KRG's Minister of Peshmerga Affairs and Minister of Interior, reached an agreement - later approved by both PM Maliki and KRG President Barzani - to establish a series of CCPs and CSAs across the DIBs areas in northern Iraq. In the CSAs, combined U.S.-Iraqi-peshmerga forces will conduct patrols and coordinate movement, bolstering security in seam areas and permitting freedom of movement in areas in which the ability of Arabs and/or Kurds to travel has been circumscribed. The goal of the initiative is to improve security in the DIBs areas, particularly during the volatile period of elections and government formation, so the political process can move forward.

#### STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES

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15. (S) Within the CSAs, which are located in the DIBs areas but do not encompass the entirety of them, no single military force can operate independently. Military forces must instead seek approval from, and operate in coordination with, the other two forces. (Note: Local police retain their ability to operate unilaterally in their areas of jurisdiction. End note.) The CSMs are designed only for the execution of combined operations by IA, IP, peshmerga and USF. All activities will comply with Iraqi law and the Security Agreement.

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16. (S) All parties will coordinate with the CCCs for movement, entry, transit, and combat operations in CSAs. The CCPs will each be manned by 33 soldiers. The CCPs and CCCs will operate 24 hours a day, seven days a week. No checkpoints will be established, or operations conducted in CSAs, without coordinating with the CCC and agreed upon by ISF and USF. All forces located inside a Combined Security Area (CSA) are required to keep the CCC informed of operations and activities, and are subject to the approval of the ISF and USF.

17. (S) The CSMs are located in three provinces - Ninewa, Kirkuk, and Diyala. The breakdown for each province is as follows:

-- Ninewa: The CCC is located at the Ninewa Operations Center (NiOC); it supervises six CSAs and fifteen CCPs.

-- Kirkuk: The CCC is located at FOB Warrior; it supervises one CSA and 6 CCPs. The Kirkuk CCPs are operated by Kirkuk Iraqi Police (IP) and USF only (no IA or peshmerga).

-- Diyala: The CCC is located at the Diyala Operations Center (DOC); it supervises one CSA and five CCPs.

#### COMMAND AND CONTROL AND THE ROLE OF U.S. FORCES

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18. (S) The Combined Coordination Centers (CCCs), consist of representatives of Iraqi and Kurdish security forces, working with USF supervision and advisory assistance to control and coordinate operations in the CSAs. The CCCs are subordinate to the Senior Working Group Coordination Center (SWGCC), which is comprised of the senior military commanders from all sides and is located in the vicinity of the Coalition Partner Operations Center (CPOC) at the Iraqi Ground Forces Command (IGFC) Headquarters. The SWGCC is managed by ISF and USF to provide higher level coordination. Above the SWGCC is the High Ministerial Committee (HMC), the group of senior principals who developed the CSM architecture and which may be convened to address issues that the CCCs and SWGCC are

unable to resolve.

¶9. (S) USF are authorized to supervise and coordinate all functions and activities in Combined Security Areas (CSAs) through its designated representative located in the Combined Coordination Centers (CCCs). USF have the authority to coordinate, support and supervise, but no authority to make a unilateral decisions or compel the other parties to execute an operation. If there is no agreement between the parties, the matter will be forwarded to the Senior Working Group. USF will supervise, support and advise during the execution of all operations carried out by the combined forces.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

¶10. (S) The CSMs are envisioned as a two-phase initiative. Phase I is temporary and is expected to last four to six months, i.e., through the upcoming national elections and government formation period. The specific goal during Phase I is to provide increased security and oversight throughout the DIBs areas. Phase II would be an enduring arrangement based on unity of command that would integrate select peshmerga units and Kurdish intelligence elements (asayish) into the GOI's security structure. Peshmerga or asayish elements that are not integrated under GOI command and control would be withdrawn from areas below the Green Line in which they are currently deployed, and would be restricted to the Iraqi Kurdistan Region (IKR).

¶11. (S) On December 12, ISF and USF commanders began preparations to implement the CSMs. The Ninewa and Diyala CCCs became operational on December 15; the Kirkuk CCC and the SWGCC began work on December 20. From December 20 until January 5, IA, IP, peshmerga and USF completed combined training on intelligence fusion and reporting, steps for escalation of force and rules of engagement, checkpoint operations, medical treatment and evacuation, establishment of a landing zone, reaction to indirect and direct fire, and defending a position. Command post (CCC and SWGCC) rehearsals were conducted on January 20. It is expected that all CSMs (CSAs and CCPs) will be at initial operating capability no later than January 31. After national elections on March 7, the location of the CCPs and CSAs will be reviewed and adjusted as necessary to ensure security for the Iraqi civilian population. (Note: While the CSMs will enhance election security, they are not specifically tied to the elections in terms of design or execution. End Note.)

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#### TALKING POINTS

¶12. (SBU) To date, only select senior USF-I and Embassy Baghdad leaders have been authorized to speak with the media about the CSMs. The following talking points are for reference only; inquiries about the CSMs are to be referred to the USF-I Commanding General's public affairs office and/or Embassy Baghdad for response/comment.

- Iraqi Prime Minister Maliki and Kurdistan Regional President Barzani requested U.S. support in establishing security mechanisms in northern Iraq.
- The Combined Security Mechanisms (CSMs) are in full compliance with the Security Agreement between Iraq and the United States.
- Repositioning of U.S. Forces in northern Iraq in support of this plan has been coordinated and approved with the Government of Iraq in accordance with all measures of the Security Agreement and will be temporary.
- The CSMs consist of temporary, non-political measures

across the disputed internal boundary (DIBs) areas of Northern Iraqi, designed to ensure the security of the Iraqi population.

- These measures have the corollary effect of reducing tensions between Arabs and Kurds, and increasing regional security during the period of highest risk through the Iraqi Parliamentary Elections and government formation.

- Long-term security requires political solutions, not just temporary security measures.

- Iraqi Army (IA), Iraqi Police (IP), Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Guard Forces (peshmerga) and United States Forces (USF) commanders have been directed to immediately begin all necessary joint preparations, training and rehearsals for CSM implementation.

- Across northern parts of the country, al-Qaeda in Iraq (AQI) and other violent extremist groups continue to exploit the de facto internal boundary created by the separation of Iraqi Army and Iraqi Kurdistan Regional Guard Forces (peshmerga).

- The GoI's Minister of Defense and Minister of Interior, together with the KRG's Minister of Peshmerga Affairs and Minister of Interior, reached an agreement - later approved by both PM Maliki and KRG President Barzani - to establish an architecture of Combined Security Areas (CSAs) and Combined Checkpoints (CCPs) throughout Northern Iraq.

- Within these CSAs, which are located in the DIBs areas but do not encompass the entirety of them, no single military force can operate independently. Military forces must instead seek approval from, and operate in coordination with, the other two forces. Operations within the CSAs are tripartite.

- Local police retain their ability to operate unilaterally in their areas of jurisdiction.

- In order to maintain police primacy in Kirkuk City, combined checkpoints near the city will consist of only Iraqi Police and USF. Kirkuk based Combined Checkpoints are bipartite (IP/USF), not tripartite (IA/IP/peshmerga/USF). Neither the Iraqi Army nor peshmerga will operate in or around the city of Kirkuk as part of this agreement.

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